



School Modification Ideas for Students Who Receive Special Education Services

Students with disabilities who receive special education services sometimes need modifications in their educational programs. A modification is an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the assignment or test is supposed to measure.¹ Examples of modifications include a student completing work on part of an academic standard or a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable. A modification alters what is expected of the student.

Modifications should be discussed by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team,² and chosen to fit the individual needs of the student. Team decisions are written into a student's IEP.

The following modifications are examples of modifications which may or may not be appropriate for an individual student.

Books

Provide alternative books with similar concepts but at an easier reading level

- Give page numbers to help the student find answers

Math

- Focus on mastery of more practical math concepts

Assignments

- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts rather than all concepts
- Give an alternate assignment
- Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering more functional words

Tests

- Use recognition tests (true-false, multiple choice, or matching) instead of essays
- Test spelling separate from written content
- Provide the first letter of the missing word
- Allow take-home or open-book tests
- Provide a vocabulary list with definitions
- Provide possible answers for fill-in-the-blank sections
- Allow partial work on an academic standard

¹ Some students also need accommodations which allow a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, or presentation. The accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. For more information, see PACER's handout "School Accommodation Ideas for Students who Receive Section 504 or Special Education Services" [PACER.org/parent/php/PHP-c267.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c267.pdf)

² See "Questions for Parents to Ask about School Adaptations" [PACER.org/parent/php/PHP-c91.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c91.pdf)

Grading

- Provide grades based on individual progress or effort
- Permit a student to rework missed problems for a higher grade
- Use a pass-fail or an alternate grading system
- Average grades out when assignments are reworked or grade on corrected work

Behavior and discipline

- Hold student accountable to modified school discipline standards